

U.S. Embassy Freetown, Sierra Leone  
Security Message for U.S. Citizens: Update on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)  
May 27, 2014

This is an update to the notice of April 7, 2014, in which we alerted U.S. citizens to the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in neighboring Guinea.

As of May 27, the Lassa Fever Laboratory at the Kenema Government Hospital in Sierra Leone confirmed that there is one individual with the Ebola virus and six suspected cases in Sierra Leone. The sample for the confirmed individual was collected from a patient in Koindu health post, Kailahun district (bordering Guinea). The individual with the Ebola virus and the other six who are suspected to have the Ebola virus are currently still alive. Reports of four fatalities due to the Ebola virus have not been confirmed.

The U.S. Department of State medical experts note that:

- The suspect Ebola cases are in a remote area of Sierra Leone adjoining the areas in Guinea where the outbreak was first discovered. These additional cases in the region were not unexpected by scientists studying the outbreak.
- U.S. citizens (who are not Health Care Workers in the affected area) are considered at very low risk of EVD.
- The suspected reservoirs for EVD are fruit bats.
- EVD in humans is thought to be through contact with infected bats or primates (such as monkey, chimpanzees and gorillas) that have become infected by bats.
- Undercooked infected bat and primate (bush) meat can transmit EVD to humans.
- Human to human transmission is only achieved by physical contact with a person who is acutely and gravely ill from EVD or their body fluids.
- EVD transmission among humans is almost exclusively among health care workers (or family members) who are providing care for the very ill with little or no infection control protection such as gloves. Handling and touching of the deceased from EVD has also been associated with secondary cases.
- The virus is easily killed by contact with soap, bleach, sunlight, or drying. A washing machine will kill EVD in clothing saturated with infected body fluids.
- A person can incubate EVD without symptoms for two to twenty-one days, the average being five to eight days before becoming ill. PERSONS ARE NOT CONTAGIOUS during this period.
- Only when ill, does EVD load express itself first in the blood and then in other bodily fluids (to include vomit, feces, urine, breast milk, semen, and sweat).
- If you are walking around you are not infectious to others.
- There are documented cases from Kikwit, Democratic Republic of Congo of an EVD outbreak in a village that had the custom of children never touching an ill adult. Children living for days in small one room huts with parents who died from EVD did not become infected.
- You cannot contract EVD by handling money, buying local bread, or swimming in a pool.

- At this time, there is no medical reason to stop flights, close borders, restrict travel or close embassies, businesses or schools.
- As always, practice good hand washing techniques. You will not contract EVD if you do not touch a dying person.
- The U.S. Embassy is open for business as usual, including the consular section.

For more information:

- Continue to visit the [U.S. Embassy Freetown website and Facebook page](#) for regular updates.
- Visit the World Health Organization [website](#).
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [website](#).

We strongly recommend that U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in Sierra Leone enroll in the [Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). STEP enrollment gives you the latest security updates, and makes it easier for the U.S. embassy or nearest U.S. consulate to contact you in an emergency. If you don't have Internet access, enroll directly with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Contact the U.S. embassy for up-to-date information on travel restrictions by visiting the [U.S. Embassy Freetown](#) website. You can also get global updates at the U.S. Department of State [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), where you can find the current [Worldwide Caution](#), [Travel Warnings](#), [Travel Alerts](#), and [Country Specific Information](#). If you don't have internet access, you can get current information on safety and security by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States, or for callers from other countries, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). Also follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

The U.S. Embassy in Freetown is located at Leicester Square, Regent. If you have questions or concerns about safety or related issues, contact the consular section at the Embassy by sending an email to [consularfreetown@state.gov](mailto:consularfreetown@state.gov) or calling 232(76) 515-000 or 076-515-000. For after- hours emergencies, please call Tel: 232-(76) 515-000 or 076-515-000.

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